



**Testimony
Robin Wilson
Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce
Before the Public Health Committee
March 12, 2010**

Re: HB-5477, AN ACT CONCERNING THE CLEAN WATER ACT AND STREAM FLOW REGULATIONS

The Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce *supports the intent of HB-5477*, which seeks to address serious concerns with proposed stream flow regulations, as follows:

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY NEEDS OF CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES - Hospitals, nursing homes, manufacturers, restaurants and other businesses of all sizes and types rely on a safe, adequate supply of potable water to operate their businesses and meet the needs of their customers. However, the proposed stream flow regulations would significantly reduce the amount of water available to meet these needs. Section 2(b) of the bill will help address this concern by ensuring that the state Department of Public Health, which has cognizance over drinking water, can step in to ensure that public water supplies are protected.

CONNECTICUT ECONOMY - Connecticut faces significant challenges in creating a competitive business climate due to high taxes, unemployment and workers compensation costs as well as escalating energy and housing costs. Connecticut lost 88,200 jobs since the recession began in March 2008, including 15,000 in the current 2010 fiscal year. We need to focus our leadership on the serious problems immediately facing this state in order to build a more competitive business climate. It is our understanding that less than 1% of the streams in Connecticut are documented as having flow impairment issues. Given the magnitude of the state's economic and budgetary problems, and the limited scope of stream flow impairments, we support Section 2(a) of the bill which requires DEP to classify the basins and identify streams with low flows before imposing reservoir release requirements and groundwater limitations which will result in economic development moratoriums in many communities.

STATE BUDGET CRISIS - Given a budget deficit that is projected to reach between \$3.2 and \$3.4 billion by Fiscal Year 2012, the state needs to reduce the size and cost of government and focus on providing core services to Connecticut residents and businesses. We therefore applaud the section of the bill that calls for the state to examine the costs associated with compliance before proceeding with a regulation that could cost hundreds of millions of dollars to implement.

We believe HB-5477 provides the framework for a more workable, balanced approach to addressing stream flow and urge its adoption.

The Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce serves more than 800 member companies from the North Haven and Wallingford area. We are the largest non-metropolitan chamber in the state.

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